

Message Text

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ACTION HEW-04

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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH THE NEW HEALTH SECRETARY

REF: NEW DELHI A-398 OF OCTOBER 18, 1974

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS PAID A COURTESY CALL YESTERDAY
ON THE RECENTLY APPOINTED HEALTH SECRETARY, MR. GIAN
PRAKASH (SEE REF. AIRGRAM A-398).

23 WE OPENED BY EXTENDING AN INVITATION FROM THE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, DHEW, TO MR. PRAKASH
TO VISIT THE US TO MEET WITH HEALTH LEADERS AND DISCUSS
COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS. THIS SAME INVITATION WAS EXTENDED
ORIGINALLY TO MR. C. RAMACHANDRAN, THE PREVIOUS HEALTH
SECRETARY, WHO WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT BECAUSE OF HIS
RETIREMENT. MR. PRAKASH WAS PLEASED WITH THE INVITATION
AND INDICATED, BECAUSE OF THE CONVENING OF PARLIAMENT
AND HIS BEING NEW IN THE POSITION, IT WOULD NOT BE
POSSIBLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INVITATION AT HIS
TIME. HOWEVER, HE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO VISITING THE
US AT AN AGREEABLE TIME NEXT YEAR.

3. THE SECRETARY SEEMS VERY FRIENDLY, EXTREMELY BRIGHT
AND WELL-INFORMED ALREADY ON US-INDO HEALTH COOPERATION,
PARTICULARLY THE SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY PROGRAM (SFCP).
HE RECOGNIZED HOW IMPORTANT THIS COLLABORATION HAD BEEN
IN THE PAST AND FELT THERE WERE MANY AREAS FOR FUTURE
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COOPERATION.

4. WE DISCUSSED THE INDO-US JOINT COMMISSION THAT WAS CREATED ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, AND INDICATED THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMISSION WOULD PROBABLY MEET BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. MR. PRAKASH SUGGESTED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT INDIA ATTACHED TO HEALTH DELIVERY, FAMILY PLANNING, AND MEDICAL RESEARCH, THAT HE FELT A SEPARATE WORKING GROUP SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE MOH AND THE APPROPRIATE US AGENCY. THIS GROUP COULD RECOMMEND JOINT PROGRAMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE JOINT COMMISSION. EMBASSY OFFICERS AGREED THIS WOULD BE A CONVENIENT MECHANISM FOR COOPERATION AND WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE FIRST S AND T SUBCOMMISSION MEETING. IN FACT, THE SUBCOMMISSION WOULD MOST LIKELY INCLUDE A US HEALTH OFFICIAL AS A PERMANENT MEMBER.

5. WE REVIEWED BRIEFLY THE SUBSTANTIAL COOPERATIVE S AND T PROGRAMS NOW UNDERWAY BETWEEN THE US AND INDIA. THE SECRETARY'S ATTENTION WAS BROUGHT TO THE 20 ODD JOINT RESEARCH AGREEMENTS NOW WITH THE MOH WHICH HAVE BEEN CLEARED BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS. THESE PROJECTS ARE BEING HELD UNTIL THE MOH/DHEW FORMAT AGREEMENT CAN BE FINALLY NEGOTIATED. WE INDICATED THE MOH HAD SUBMITTED TO THE EMBASSY FINAL WORDING ON THE PATENT CLAUSE (THE ONLY REMAINING OBSTACLE) BUT THERE HAD BEEN DIFFICULTY IN GETTING TOGETHER WITH THE CONCERNED MOH OFFICIALS TO FINALIZE THE DOCUMENT. MR. PRAKASH SAID HE WOULD REQUEST THE FILE FROM THE JOINT SECRETARY AND CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION. MOYNIHAN

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